Beet-Relish Cheddar Thumbprints

24 small savory thumbprint biscuits, each with beet relish | Active 35 min | Cook 35 min | Total 135 min

Ingredients

• 150 g/5 1/4 oz ready-to-eat cooked beet, finely chopped

• 20 ml apple cider vinegar (1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon)

• 10 g sugar (2 1/2 teaspoons)

• 5 g Dijon mustard (1 teaspoon)

• 150 g all-purpose flour (1 1/4 cups)

• 80 g cold butter (about 5 1/2 tablespoons), diced

• 100 g/3 1/2 oz sharp cheddar, finely grated

• 15 ml milk (1 tablespoon), plus up to 15 ml only if dough remains dry

• 0.5 g black pepper (1/4 teaspoon)

Set out

Oven, Two baking trays with usable 30 × 25 cm/12 × 10 in bases, Parchment, Small saucepan, Bowl, Scale, Grater, Knife and board, Small spoon, Cooling rack, Refrigerator and covered containers

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Mustard. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Simmer beet, vinegar and sugar in the saucepan 8-10 minutes, stirring, until thick enough to mound with no free liquid. Stir in mustard and cool in a shallow bowl 20 minutes.

2. Rub butter into flour, then mix in cheese and pepper. Add 15 ml milk and squeeze gently into a dough; use only the extra milk needed to bring dry crumbs together. Cover and refrigerate 20 minutes. Heat the oven to 350°F/180°C.

3. Divide the complete dough into 24 equal balls, about 14-15 g each. Arrange 12 on each lined tray, at least 3 cm/1 1/4 in apart. Flatten to about 3.5 cm/1 3/8 in wide and make a shallow central well with a clean thumb or spoon. Do not taste raw dough.

4. Bake 12-15 minutes until edges begin to color and the bases are set. Re-form any shallow wells with a spoon. Divide all the cooled relish among the 24 centers, a small rounded spoonful each. Bake another 6-8 minutes until biscuits are fully baked, firm underneath and free of a damp floury seam.

5. Cool on the trays 10 minutes, then move to the rack for about 10 minutes, until no longer steaming. Refrigerate in shallow containers for at least 30 minutes and until cold at 40°F/4°C or below. Serve small batches cool rather than leaving the whole filled batch out.

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Bring it

Chill first and pack in a single layer in a rigid shallow box in an iced cooler, at 40°F/4°C or below. Keep travel plus display without refrigeration under 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C.

Finish at the gathering

No host oven is required. Put 12 biscuits on a small chilled plate and replenish from the cooler. They can lose their sharp refrigerator chill for a few minutes while guests choose them; that time still counts toward the display limit.

Make it yours

Keep the purple centers for a winter savory spread, or use the carrot version when an orange color fits the occasion. Both are savory biscuits, so label them beside the sweet plates.

Ingredient labels

Flour contains wheat; butter, cheese and milk contain milk; Dijon contains mustard. Check cooked beet and cheese labels.

A useful detail

The 135-minute cold-service schedule allows relish preparation and cooling, overlapping dough mixing and chilling, up to 23 minutes baking, about 20 minutes initial cooling and at least 30 minutes refrigeration. Chill longer until fully cold. Divide all the actual reduced relish evenly among the biscuits.

Another way

Use 150 g ready-to-eat cooked carrot in place of beet for an orange relish; keep the reduction stage.

Use 100 g mature Gouda instead of cheddar; the biscuits still contain milk.

Keep it well

Keep filled biscuits covered at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 2 days or an earlier cheese deadline. Refrigerate promptly and follow the Bring it handling limits. The relish softens the centers over time; the filled biscuits need cold storage.